"Universities as factors in the Confederation of Canada" 1917/18

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Extract XXXII

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Universities as Factors in the
Confederation of Canada.

During the past fifty years the Universities have been potent influences in the unification of the life of the Dominion. In the story of their struggles has been engraved the record of some of the most significant events and of some of the leading persons of our country's history. Their development showed one facet of the problem of government, so many sided as it was, for education and religion always reflect the shadow and the sunshine of national experience.

But as active creators of Western Canada the Universities have been very influential. A visitor to Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver cannot fail to be impressed by the very large number of the professional men in these cities who are graduates of Eastern Canadian Universities. And these Canadians are the leaders in the intellectual life of the West. They help to set the standards and they are among the most active participants in creating professional ideals in the provinces of their adoption. Nor do they forget their old universities, for hundreds of the sons and daughters of these graduates have come East, even since the establishment of the noble universities in the West, to complete their education in the colleges and professional schools to which their fathers' memories turn in affection. The contribution of educated men and women made by the East to the West drained heavily the strength of the older provinces, but it has been of inestimable value to the unity of our

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Canadian life. In the West these young lawyers, doctors, clergymen and teachers also in many cases attained to influence more rapidly then they would have at home and their lives were filled with usefulness.

At present again the universities areserwing a strong purpose in welding the East and the West together. Doubtless the French-speaking universities of Quetec have influence among those of the same race and tongue in the West; certainly the English-speaking universities are powerful national factors. They agree in providing one type of education, and on the whole it is a type which was drawn from Britain, though it has teen modified in the course of years to suit new conditions. It is to te expected that there will te some differences of standard, but it is not difficult to secure transfers from one university to the other without very great changes. Students may tegin their studies in the West and finish in the East with only a few local additions or changes. Moreover the effort is teing made ty the larger Eastern universities to improve their facilities so that the graduates of Canadian universitie may find it possitle to get advanced work in our own country. By their history, ty their common views of education, ty the training of students who leave their own homes for other parts of the country and carry with them their youthful ideals, and ty a common effort to promote Canadian standards the Universities have teen and are influential promoters of the national life of the Dominion.